ASIFA EAST

ANYMATOR

A NEWSLETTER OF THE ANIMATED ARTS

1993 ASIFA-EAST ANIMATION AWARDS

Thursday, January 28th 1993
5:30 PM to 8:00 PM
Donnell Library Center
20 West 53rd Street (across from MOMA)
in the Banker's Trust Auditorium

(Party to follow festival)

JANUARY 1992

Best of Hiroshima 1992 January 29-31

Best of Hiroshima '92 presents selections from the fourth International Animation Festival held in Hiroshima, Japan. Two of the programs show the breadth of contemporary animation, with recent films by such distinguished animators as Priit Parn, Peter Lord, and Piotr Dumala, as well as many other innovative creators. The Third program is a salute to master Japanese animation artisit Kihachiro Kawamoto and Osamu Tezuka. The films were selected by Helene Tanguay, with the assistance of Paul Glabicki. The Department of Film gratefully acknowledges the Hiroshima '92 International Animation Festival and its director, Sayoko Kinoshita, with thanks to Huguette Parent and the National Film Board of Canada. The exhibition was organized by Adrienne Mancia, Curator, Department of Film.

(Above information taken from MOMA Calender)

ASIFA-EAST
The International Animated Film Society
c/o Linda Simensky
470 West 24th Street, #15A
New York, N.Y. 10011
A PROGRAM OF
THE CULTURAL COUNCIL FOUNDATION

ASIFA EAST
The International Animated Film Society (New York Chapter)
A program of the Cultural Council Foundation

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1993 ASIFA-EAST ANIMATION AWARDS

Other festivals come and go, but this one has been going on for years. Animated shorts are given three or more prizes in each of the categories of Direction, Design, Animation, Concept, and Sound/Music. In addition there are special prizes for best Children's Film, for the film most expressive of Charles Samu's goals of international understanding, for best Student films, and a number of Honorable Mentions. The "Jury" is composed of our peers, all the ASIFA-East members who show up in the midst of a January snowstorm to vote on the films they like the best. The prize-winning films are subsequently screened to a New York audience that has often topped 300. The prize-winning films then go on to screenings at each of the other ASIFA groups in the U.S. ASIFA-San Francisco members have adopted a wonderful policy of themselves voting on the winning films, giving cash prizes to the top three choices.

Deadline will be in early January. For entry forms, write:

ASIFA-East Awards, c/o
Linda Simensky, 470 W24th Street, #15A, New York, N.Y. 10011.

ASIFA-EAST JURY SELECTIONS FOR 1993 ANIMATION AWARDS

Wednesday, January 13th & Thursday, January 14th 6 - 9 PM

All current paid members of ASIFA-East are eligible to serve as jury. Vote and select the best films to be included in the 1993 ASIFA-East animation awards.

Tisch School of the Arts
721 Broadway Room 006 (Basement)

INTERVIEW WITH MIKE SPORN

by David Ehrlich

This interview has a very special focus, because I knew that Mike wished to express his objections to the ways in which a number of the ASIFA-patronized animation festivals have been selecting and showing films.

MIKE: If you read the original bylaws of ASIFA, the one reason these festivals were originally set up was to show filmmakers' films. And all animation festivals have gotten to the point where they're just so political that they eliminate films left and right to the point where there were so few films from New York City which has a large number of filmmakers, both independent and commercial. The same thing happens with Annecy, with Zagreb. They all have their different tenors, but when a studio like mine enters 10 animated films, two of which are half-hours, the rest of which are shorts, and they have a category for children's films, and that's predominantly what we do, one wonders why even out-of-competition, none of those films are shown. I feel like my stuff is professional and I feel that at least one of my films could have been shown in some way. I don't expect that you can really defend Ottawa, since you're not the Ottawa Animation Festival, or Annecy. It's just that something has happened to ASIFA that it has become something other than what it was set up to do.

DAVID: I have no idea what happened in Selection at Ottawa. You bemoan the absence of New York animation in the Selection. I wasn't happy that 75% of the films at an "international festival" came from North America and England. At first I was told that was because there is very little work being done around the world. Then I found out there were over 700 films entered. From the 700 films, it is confusing to me that they couldn't find more than 18 good films from other than the three countries. But selection is, by nature, subjective.

MIKE: I understand that when you choose Competition films, you want to make the best selection, because you're selling tickets. But there are ways to show films out of Competition or at late night showings.

DAVID: At Ottawa there has always been the Chez Ani, and it was very good. Anyone who brought a film to Ottawa that had not been accepted into Competition or Panorama would be able to show it to a dedicated group of people who would go to Chez Ani. Co Hoedeman used to run it...it would go all day and well into the night. But Co didn't do it this time, and the Chez Ani was not an integral part of this festival. It was over a 15-minute walk, in a place not conducive to these kinds of screenings.

MIKE: Of the 10 films I submitted, why wasn't one shown even out of Competition or in an extra screening, a midnight screening– where you could see a mixed bag..not all good, but every once in awhile you'd see a great one. If you go to animation festivals, you want to be involved, and if you're not involved, you might as well just be a person off the street buying tickets. Terry Thoren ran the Animation Celebrations, at a movie theater in Hollywood. It was really nice in that there were a lot of European films, a lot of East European films, a good mix of films. We sent five films and they selected one to show out of competition, and they asked if I would come. I paid my own way and had to pay for tickets for most of the shows I went to, but I didn't mind. I got to see alot of animation films, and I had a good time meeting a lot of people. You just want to be part of something. You're not looking for a freebie, necessarily. I'm sure you've gone to festivals where your films were being shown and festivals where your films were not being shown, and you must have felt the difference as well. I'm not suggesting I have to be in Competition because I entered the film. I would like my film to

be shown somehow, someway up there. There should have been a way to show maybe 300 of those 700 films rather than 75.

DAVID: As a general principle I agree. I would have liked to see not only the New York films but the European and Asian films not selected. In the case of Ottawa they were so financially strapped, I suppose it would have been very difficult for them to include extra shows. I think that most festivals would think twice about investing their limited funds in extra "out-of" out-of Competition shows, even after midnight.

MIKE: Then what's the point of having a festival?

DAVID: What you're saying is that if you can't have a festival that meets the needs of all the animators, you shouldn't do it at all. In fact, there were people up there who felt at moments that they should not continue a festival in imperfect conditions. Ottawa Festival IS the only animation festival (as distinct from "Celebration") on our continent. There are really two issues here: Firstly, you feel a festival should somehow support all the animators who come to it and it's not sufficient to have only a Competition and Panorama screening of the films submitted. Another issue is what happens in the selection.

MIKE: It gets to the point that you make films, you make them on your own, and they get rejected by festival after festival. More than one well-known animator has quit making personal films for this reason. Nobody got to see them. If they can't be screened at a festival, what's the purpose of making them. Shorts are certainly not marketable elsewhere. If they're not even going to be seen by the animation community, why are you doing it. I did a film called the HUNTING OF THE SNARK. I spent $45,000 on this film. I loved it, and not everyone has to love it, but I'm confused as to why it's not shown anywhere, out of competition, or any way whatsoever. There's got to be some kind of side-bar that festivals set up for us, the animators.

DAVID: You didn't go to Ottawa. But if you had known ahead of time that your film would be shown in a midnight side-bar, would you have gone after all?

MIKE: Possibly. Certainly in the past, the last two Ottawa Festivals, I had planned to go but just couldn't see the point in it. The films were rejected. In '88, Tom Knott called me from Ottawa telling me how much he loved ABEL and asking me to come to speak about how to do a storyboard, but yet my film wasn't good enough to be shown up there.

DAVID: You see, you interpret it as "not good enough" to be shown. First of all, Tom Knott doesn't select the films. Secondly, there are a lot of good films not selected in festivals. It's a subjective judgement, made by imperfect humans. It's hard sometimes to make a distinction as to why you really like a film.

MIKE: Maybe they should eliminate all competition festivals and just show all the films. (LAUGHS)

DAVID: The East Europeans and the Russians need these prizes...the money and the recognition. All of us would like that too, but, I would agree that in general, it's more important for us to have the film seen than to compete for a prize.

MIKE: One of my favorite festivals has now become the local ASIFA-East Awards.

DAVID: Yeah, you win all the prizes!

MIKE: It has nothing to do with winning prizes. Even when I don't have films in there, I enjoy going because it's just a mixed bag of films. Actually, what I like more than the award ceremony, are the endless nights of jurying. You see films that don't win prizes, that are great, and will never get seen again.

DAVID: You make ASIFA responsible for what you think is wrong with the other festivals.

MIKE: In the original ASIFA bylaws, one of the principal statements that are made is to promote film festivals to show animated films.

DAVID: We don't control all aspects of the festivals we patronize.

MIKE: But ASIFA can ask or suggest that festivals get more involved in showing more films. ASIFA has certain demands of a film festival. If Ottawa isn't going to show any of the films except the Competition films, which are very few (75/700), what's the point. ASIFA should say, why are we sponsoring you, then? If Terry Thoren's festival shows more, why not patronize Terry Thoren's festival, regardless of whether filmmakers have to pay their own

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NEW YORK UPDATE

As most of you can probably tell, I have a real problem with getting this article started again after three months off for the summer. But in classic Warburton fashion, I have triumphantly returned with new tales of the animation front that will thrill and delight you. I could start telling you about my trip to England where I toured the studio of Speedy Cartoons and the Liverpool Animation Museum. I could tell you about new and upcoming animated films and features. I could tell you my critical views on the films of the Brothers Quay. But why should I bore you with that when I can tell you everything you want to know about Ed Smith and Tony Kluck? So before I end up taking another 5 month vacation from this column....Lets get this goin'on.

A long time ago a guy named Shamus Culhane (any of you heard of him?) was starting a studio here in New York to work in the pioneering stages of commercial animation. It just so happened that another guy by the name of Ed Smith came along with his illustration portfolio looking for a job. Shamus gave him his first animation job as background artist for the then tasty sum of $85 a week. While this was all well and good, Ed later transferred over to being an apprentice animator for the not so tasty pay cut of $50 a week. It escapes my mind, and the notes I took when I talked to him, why he would take a pay cut. But I can assure you one thing, it did him well for the future because today he is a very well known New York animator. If you happened to see the Culhane retrospective at Moma last year, you most likely saw some of Ed's first inbetweens on such commercials as Muriel Cigars and the classic Ajax spots.

When the time came to move on, Ed went to a studio, Film Graphics, that many of the old school crowd I've interviewed seem to have converged on at one point or another. This is the place where he graduated to the level of assistant animator for such projects as the I Love Lucy Show and a whole lot of films done for the state.But after that came the studio that really had some of the most impact on his career. I don't suppose any of you have heard of the John Hubley studio have you? If you haven't heard of it, you've been living under a big rock and you should most likely stay there because some of the most beautiful work in design and animation has come out of there. This is also where Ed Smith became (trumpets, please) an animator. Possibly one of the coolest things for an animator is to see something you worked on get an Academy Award and Ed saw that happen with a film called Moonbird, and one other film showcasing the music of Herb Alpert. How many of you can make that claim? I didn't think so. As all good things come to an end, Ed eventually found himself at other classic old-school animation hang outs such as the highly innovative and experimental studio of Fred Mogubgub, the wacky Ernie Pintoff studio, Jack Zander's Pelican studio and Elektra.

The place he seemed to have stayed the longest was at R.O. Blechman's Ink Tank where he hung out for twenty some years working on t.v. specials and " about 10,000 commercials ".He also was one of the animators on Blechman's " The Soldier's Tale ", which I'm sure many of you have seen by now.'

Right about now, you're wantin' to know what Ed Smith is doin' nowadays ain't ya'? Well, of late, he has done a good deal of

work for J.J. Sedelmaier out in scenic (?) White Plains that includes spots for N'ice throat lozenges, starring the infamous talking penguins, an ad for Burger King Kid's Meals with a flying carpet, and as you're reading this, he's working on a spot for the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. With all this going on you can be sure he won't be out causing trouble, so let's hope he stays good and busy.

So now we go over to the New York Update sports desk to tell you about the Riverdale Eagles soccer team who, at this time, have a record of 3 wins, 1 loss, and one draw. What does this have to do with animation? Ask Tony Kluck, who has two goals this far into the season, and more stuff going on in animation than you can shake an exposure sheet at. Before we go into current stats, lets look at his playing history.

Tony Kluck started out as a kid in Holland who couldn't get away from reading comic magazines. His studies strayed toward Chemistry but he still studied animation by mail and when 1972 came around, he moved off to the United States to take art classes at the School of Visual Arts. His first job was at Jack Zander's studio where he took to animating right off the bat on an insecticide commercial and Avis Rent a Car spots. He moved back and forth between here and Holland, and in that time worked at a studio, called Toonder, where he met old school Danish animators that helped hone the talent he wields today. He still keeps in touch with them to work on current projects. Another studio he spent time at, called Toonde, created Holland's first animated feature about Bonnmeo, which means "Fancy Pants" to those of you unfamiliar with the language thing. Like most animated projects, budget problems came along and Tony described the final outcome of the film as "half nice".

As time rolled on, Tony opened up his own studio called "Balls", representing guts and ball sports. Ball sports, you say? I'll explain. One of the most inspiring things in Tony's life have been ball sports and the worldwide fascination with them. Not only does he play them, he's looking at animating a series about them. By now, his idea for a 52 minute pilot about soccer is being introduced at MIT, an international idea show for films. Not only is the pilot ready and waiting, but so are the ideas for 13 episodes! Not only will the shows tackle soccer, but he'd like to market the series for different countries based on the popular indigenous sports.

Regardless of their import to other countries, the shows are being done in English dialogue so there would be a greater market for it worldwide. His team includes a bunch of guys equally enthusiastic about ball games such as storyman Tom Tumbuhling, storyboardman Sam Siahaya and an American writer Tom Golden, who spends quite a bit of time coming up with ideas for new projects. Fortunately a good deal of funding has been put up by a group in the Netherlands called John De Mol Productions who seem to have good faith in Tony and his crew.

Hold on to your hats sports fans, because that's not all Mr. Kluck has going on. Currently in the wings is the development for a t.v. special, and a feature film called "The Other side of the Story", which Tony only described as having a lot of animals. With all this action going on, Tony has still found time to hang out at the Sedelmaier Production ranch and work on those N'ice throat lozenges spots I mentioned before, a Burger King ad featuring designs by Susan "Fido Dido" Rose, and a another for Bennigans restaurants. He also mentioned a couple other projects were going on, but they could not be discussed. That's all right by me, I gotta couple pretty cool secrets myself that I won't tell him.

Anyway, I'm getting out of here now so I hope you've all learned something about these two guys. I can't thank them enough for talking to me about their careers and I'll apologize in advance, like usual, for any errors that occured along the way. My teachers in high school always said I took lousy notes.

ANIMATED

YAN DING XIAN AND LIN WEN XIAO

Yan Ding Xian and Lin Wen Xiao are both Directors at the Shanghai Animation Studio. Yan served as Head of the Studio from 1985 until 1989, and as Director of the First Shanghai Animation Festival in 1988. He is President of ASIFA-China and a member of the ASIFA Executive Board. Yan and his wife, Lin Wen Xiao were busy co-directing an animated rendition of ancient Chinese cave-paintings, but they graciously found time for this interview.

DAVID: Lin, do you remember the first time you met Yan Dingxian?

LIN: In 1951, when we were studying art at the same college. We liked to work together in drawing, but we were just good friends. We both liked dancing, and used to go dancing together, just as friends, but most of our classmates mistakenly thought we were lovers. I grew very angry at their jokes and wouldn't speak to Yan for a long time. But, in 1956, a few years after we joined the Shanghai Animation Studio, we started doing key animation together and gradually began to speak to each other again.

YAN: At school, there was another couple that liked to go dancing together, and our classmates were joking about them too. But they ended up not getting married. We finally did fall in love and were married, in 1958.

DAVID: Lin, when were you first given a directing assignment?

LIN: I worked on key animation until 1977. Then I got to co-direct my first film in 1978, with A Da: "ONE NIGHT IN AN ART GALLERY".

DAVID; This was an animated parody about the Gang of Four, wasn't it? When you began this film in 1977, were you afraid? It was, after all, a little risky. The Gang of Four had not yet completely fallen out of the picture.

LIN: We were not afraid. We thought the Gang of Four were in prison and we did not believe they could rise again. After all that happened to us during the Cultural Revolution, we were not afraid. It couldn't be worse than that.

YAN: For ten years, from '65-'75, we couldn't do animation. We were laboring.

DAVID: You both labored together?

YAN: Separately, often in different parts of the countryside. My specialty was feeding the chickens and Lin's was planting vegetables.

LIN: Actually we were doing everything.

DAVID: What did you do about artistic ideas during this time?

YAN: NO ideas about art and artists! ONLY chickens and vegetables! We were afraid of being criticized. We worked for one year, separately, far from Shanghai, and then came back to work, separately again, in the countryside outside Shanghai. When we were first sent out, our younger son was only six months old, our older one was eight years old.

DAVID: Where did your sons live during this time?

YAN: For two years, others were taking care of the children. We could come back to Shanghai from the countryside every month for a day or so

COUPLES by David Ehrlich

to see them.
DAVID: And NO art during this time?
LIN: Well, actually, sometimes when everyone was listening to those speeches, I would hide in my bed and do some drawings.
DAVID: Yan, when were you able to return to animation ?
YAN: After the Gang of Four. We both came back to the studio in the mid-70's. We continued the same film we had begun before we were sent away. I was made director of the film, and Lin was key animator.
DAVID: Was it difficult to begin again as if nothing had happened?
YAN: We so very much wanted to work again, it was not difficult. When I was out in the provinces working, I did go out to the Wan Shang mountains, and draw a bit, in secret. The scenery was very beautiful. I still have those drawings.
DAVID: When you were laboring, what was your marriage like?
LIN: We could come back to Shanghai for a few days each month, live together, and then return to the provinces for another month. But everytime we came back, our younger son was ill, so we would spend all our time together taking care of our son, and going back and forth to the hospital. That was our marriage.
DAVID: Were you angry at the situation or were you able to accept it?
YAN: We were angry but we couldn't talk about it. It was normal for everyone at that time.
DAVID: After you returned to the studio in the early 70's, did you feel everything would be ok?
YAN: We were always afraid, and were very careful. When I returned as director, I had to listen to everyone or be criticized.
DAVID: Your older son must have asked you why all this was happening. What did you tell him?
LIN: During the Cultural Revolution, our older son was in the Nursery and got used to our absence. We sent our younger son to his grandmother. At that time, the four of us lived in four different geographical places!
DAVID: After the Cultural Revolution, when did you begin to feel relaxed?
YAN: In 1980, when Lin directed her first film and I directed NEHZA CONQUERS THE DRAGON KING with Wang Shuchen and Te Wei. The situation had somehow changed and we could all feel it.
LIN: We could even begin to dance again at that time. In our Studio!
DAVID: Lin, as a woman director, did you ever feel pressure or discrimination?
LIN: It was as if I were a man. No pressure.
DAVID: Since you were both working at the Studio, how did you divide up the household chores?
LIN: When we got married, we never did housework. If we wanted to eat, we just went to the restaurant. And then when we had the babies, we divided the work.
YAN: But mainly, Lin did it.
DAVID: Because that's Chinese tradition.
YAN: (LAUGHS) The cooking, and also the clothes. Because she is so short, I could never buy the right size clothes, so she made them. When the baby was young, she made all his clothes too.
DAVID: So she's done the cooking, the cleaning, the clothes-making-...
LIN: (LAUGHS) yes. I like making the clothes because I like designing.
DAVID: As artists, are you able to criticize each others' work.
LIN: We always argue with each other! When we cooperate on a film, our opinions are NEVER the same.
DAVID: How do you resolve it?
LIN: If we can come together, ok. If not, we just "cool it", and try to come together after another day or two. Usually after a couple of days, we can resolve it. Sometimes I give up my idea, sometimes he gives up his.
DAVID: If your younger son working in the Studio came to you and said he wanted to marry another artist, what would you say?
YAN: He already has a girlfriend, also drawing in the same room in the Studio. That's good.
DAVID: Family business?
LIN: Maybe.

FILM FESTIVALS

Cinanima

by John Cavanagh

Through the warm Portuguese November rain I dashed. The transport was waiting. I soggily climbed aboard this strangest of all vehicles: a bus filled with animators from around the world. I passed the elder, distinguished European faces who were smiling at the high jinks of their younger, decidedly undistinguished counterparts. Right in the middle of these maniacs was an empty seat that I could plop my wet American butt onto. Having done so, I immediately joined the gang in a horrific rendition of a James Brown song. We then proceeded to blaspheme a Mambo that came on the radio. Suddenly a tall pale animator stood up and dramatically pronounced himself 'King of the Bus'. As animators continued to enter the bus, they were all given titles by the King. Joanna Quinn was proclaimed Empress. Greg Lawson was dubbed honor Sir Knight. My best friend and traveling companion, John Schnall, had the dubious honor of being made Court Jestor! The newly appointed Dukes and Barons gave a noisy cheer for our wheeled Kingdom. As a week of films lay ahead, I wondered how the animated characters could possible be more outrageous than this crew who concocted them! Through most of my stay in Espinho I felt as if I were IN a cartoon show. If there is a higher compliment I can pay a festival, I'm unaware of it.

A more no nonsense sort might pen a less glowing festival report. Were that person to cite technical problems and delays, I'd be forced to give them their due. The first day of the festival, the sound system was dreadful. Films would begin out of focus. Once or twice a test pattern appeared over the film in progress! While any one of these factors would be inexcusable at other festivals, they are easy to overlook at Cinanima. In fact, they are the last things that come to mind while recalling the week. I'm far from alone in this view. All week long the morale of the festival guests was at an all time high. We want the festival to succeed brilliantly. We're pulling for it! The reason we were all on a bus to begin with is that unusual circumstances necessitated the screening of the films to be done in the nearby town of Esmoriz. Still, I heard no detractors complaining of inconvenience. Instead it becomes part of the Cinanima experience: quirky, unexpected and lovable.

There are reasons for this unlikely outlook. First of all, everyone recognized that if ever a festival's heart was in the right place, such is the case with Cinanima. Every guest from top dog film maker to young novice is treated with respect and made to feel very welcome. Whether the Espinho festival is dragging its

animators about to meet town Mayors or highschool art students, it is obvious that Cinanima is just very proud to have us all there. The totally dedicated festival directors also plan more social activities than you can shake a bottle of port wine at. At the welcoming party there was featured a traditionally Portuguese band of rural musicians clad in old style garb. As the lovely lead singer belted out vocals, band members demonstrated a gleeful dance. They then ran into the crowd of spectators, pulling them forward to learn the dances. This event kicked off a wild week of dinner buffets, field trips, brunches and discos. Later in the week I asked a festival organizer if the Portuguese folk group had any records available. The next day there were records and tapes on sale for a cheap price at the festival desk. How accommodating can you get? Yes, everyone knows that Cinanima has the right attitude. They want their festival to be fun - and it is!

The retrospective programs featured at Cinanima '92 were quite interesting. They included "Highlights of the History of British Animation 1899-1974" and "Animated Films from the Peoples Republic of China". The competition itself was the usual, marvelous international smorgasbord. England, Holland and Canada were particularly well represented this year. I believe that Liz Wassel's " Miss Fumbles Charm School" was the only entry from the United States. There was a definite Russian presence felt in the festival with Alexander Tartarsky's "Lift" series being among the most hysterical and well received entries in the festival. The audience also responded enthusiastically to a half hour production called "Urbanus:, from Ireland. Urbanus is a comedian from the U.K. who is comparable to Chris Elliot. I'm told that this well animated, cleverly written special was featured on Urbanus's television program. As for the films that the Judges responded favorably to Piotr Dumalas' "Franz Kafka" won an award as did Katherine Li's "Sabina". "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man" took a prize for its director, Alexander Petrov. The award for the best educational film went to "A is for Autism" by Tim Webb. This ten minute short used autistic people, who contributed to its production. The best children's film was "Funnybones" by Gary Hurst and one of the most pleasant surprises of the festival was "Kings of Siam". The film absolutely delighted the audience and Judges alike. Beautifully stylized and impressively executed, this piece by Ged Haney presents us with an unusual slice of life scenario. In a surreal carnival works a pair of Siamese twins, whose dreams are the focus of this film's extraordinary narrative. It also got lotsa laffs!

On the last night of the festival I lay in my hotel bedroom, looking out at the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. My memory randomly canned bits of the last five days. In front of me appeared the 700 year old castle at Santa Maria Da Feiri. It overlooked a lush European landscape dotted with lemon trees and climbing purple flowers. In this aged fortress, the festival directors had organized a cheese and cake tasting party. I talked to one of the Cinanima staff, Rose, about Portuguese history and culture. She gave me a list of Portuguese authors and playwrites, medieval and modern. I enjoyed hearing the pride in her voice as much as I did the actual contents of the history lesson. I also got a chance to talk with two larger than life Dutch Rock-n-Roll animators, Jerden and Michiel. What a pair of outlandish characters. Wherever they went, mayhem and laughs were sure to follow. Naturally I positioned myself in their chaotic line of fire at every chance possible. My memories shifted and taking the moody castle's place was a magnificent ocean side restaurant that was covered in brilliant blue and yellow tiles. In this continental dinner hall I had the good fortune to break bread with three beautiful British film makers. Loraine Marshall, Gillian Jopia, Joanna Quinn and I had a fascinating discussion on the nature of the work that women are currently involved with in the U.K. our conversation stopped short when our waiter brought over a monster for us to approve. I didn't know crabs grew that big - even in the dinosaur era! Approve? By all means, we finally said upon getting our jaws off the floor.

I also remembered Uri, a wonderfully charismatic teacher of animation from Israel. He gave a lecture entitled "Art and the

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Manipulation of Reality". I sought him out at one of the cocktail parties and we engaged in a talk that ranged form corny old jokes to ontology. At one point he lifted his glass. "To Life", He toasted. The best was yet to come, though. the closing night party and big dance were yet ahead. All the previously mentioned people would be there, making it a blast and half!

We animators are a pretty gregarious lot to begin with, but the group at Cinanima positively exuded a feeling of camaraderie. The size all made for a very close knit event. An all exclusive party atmosphere was generated. One that could be joined by small town artists, bartenders, journalists and wandering wayfarers. The Cinanima gang had actually become pretty sizable by the week's end. We literally drank our favorite local pub out of beer!

How do YOU judge the success of a festival? If intent, perseverance and personality were all that mattered, Cinanima would be the most well attended and revered festival going. Paradoxically, it wouldn't be Cinanima, then...and THAT would be inexcusable. For 16 years Cinanima has maintained its unique character. It is the "Little Animation Festival that Could."

INTERVIEW WITH MIKE SPORN

money to go to it. These are hard times and festivals are suffering financially. A lot of the filmmakers can't afford to go, but you have to pick and choose which is more important.

DAVID: ASIFA grants patronage to a festival, which a festival can then use to try to get Federal or state support. The Festival receives our patronage if it agrees to abide by our Festival regulations. Most festivals we patronize try to meet them; sometimes they fail. There are limits, however, to what we can demand from a festival. Nowhere in the regulations does it say anything about how many films must be shown, or whether there should be extra shows in the evening. Your complaint is a valid one, however, and if you care a lot about that, could you write a letter to the ASIFA Board, which we can print here as an open letter to our members, saying what the problem is and how it might be solved? Voting on a new regulation and putting it into effect is a very complex process, but if others on the Board agree with your ideas, an informal suggestion might be made to the festivals we patronize.

MIKE: Sure. I'll write a letter.

ATTENTION JANUARY MEMBER

your membership is up!!!

RENEW NOW OR YOU'LL HAVE TO WAIT 'TILL JUNE!

just fill out this form & mail to:

Tissa David
54 East 83rd Street #3c
New York NY 10028

Name _____

Address _____

city state zip _____

☐ Local member $30 ☐ International $50 make checks payable to ASIFA East

NEWS

"Ira Sleeps Over"

has been nominated for a Cable Ace Award as Best Animated Cable Program of the Year. Congratulations to Michael Sporn Animation, Inc.. Look for other Sporn programs airing soon on "Long Ago & Far Away" Channel 21 In New York.
November 29th "The Nightingale"
December 13th "The Talking Eggs"
and on "Showtime"
December 13th, 6:30 "The Poky Little Puppy's First Christmas" (first airing)

New ASIFA member

Thomas Payne, Illustrator/Animation Artist enjoys spotlight on his print ad campaign and TV spot animation for Brouillard Communications, NYC.

New York State Council on the Arts

New York State Council on the Arts upcoming grant application deadline is March, 1, 1993. The New York State Council on the Arts has long supported productions by a variety of animators. Jane Aaron, Skip Battaglia, Robert Breer, Ayoka Chenzira, George Griffin and Lewis Klahr, to name a few, have received Council support.

NYSCA will be accepting applications for film production with a submission deadline of March 1st. Independent artists residing in New York State can apply through the sponsorship of a non-profit organization.

If you'd like any additional information please call Debby Silverfine, at 212-387-7055 or contact Linda Earle or Gary Schiro of NYSCA's Individual Artist Program, 212-387-7061

Congratulations to New York based Jumbo Pictures. "Doug" has been nominated for an Ace Award in the category of Animated Series or Special.

ASIFA-East members are encouraged to submit black and white line drawings/half-tones for reproduction in ANYMATOR for a new feature on ASIFA members' works-in-progress.

LETTERS

The following are views from a member regarding a recent survey "Fifty Greatest Cartoons", sent to random members of ASIFA.

Dear Editors,

I have recently received your request for my participation in your project as a member of ASIFA. I appreciate your request, and I would be pleased to share my opinion with you. Asking members of ASIFA to contribute is a good way of gaining informed, professional credentials for your book from people who really know the subject and have dedicated their lives to it. I think this is a very astute decision on your part.

Of course asking experts to participate does invite a little scrutiny into the parameters of your project. I have made a couple observations that may be helpful, and I hope you take them with the friendly spirit I intend.

It was clear in your letter that although this book is being published by Turner Publications to celebrate the launching of the Turner Broadcasting cartoon network, the actual choosing of cartoons is being done independently. That sounds like a very wise decision. It avoids possible accusations of pandering or hidden marketing agendas.

However, given the great international richness of animation, and the large number of relatively recent contributions to the field, I am puzzled by the scope and average age of the titles that you helpfully provided to aid in the difficult task of choosing. Of the over 500 titles you listed, only a handful received academy awards or award nominations. That seems peculiar, especially in the case of the National Film Board of Canada, which is represented by two titles, yet has received over thirty nominations in the last thirty years. The NFBC is a recognized giant in the field. And what of the grand prize winners of major international festivals, like Annecy and Zagreb?

Not one of the films listed was made by a woman. Granted, the majority of animators in history have been men, but I would think that with the existence of such greats as Lotte Reininger and Faith Hubley, at least one woman would have been represented, even by chance.

I hate to say it, and I'm sure it wasn't your intention, but it almost looks as though quite a disproportionate number of the listing are titles from the vast library that Turner Broadcasting is launching its network from. This of course, in light of your assurances of fair intentions and objectivity, doesn't look very good.

This may be just a matter of not being as familiar with the field as those of us working here. I think publishing must be one of the most difficult and challenging fields there is. As publishers you're continually called upon to be experts in all the areas you cover, and every new endeavor demands another starting place in becoming familiar with your material.

If you are sincere in your efforts to actually define what might be considered the greatest fifty cartoons, I would be happy to share with you what little I know to help your prepare a sounder data base, and readily point you in the direction of better, more knowledge sources like Charles Solomon and John Canemaker.

I've included my own list of favorites. Most of my choices are not on your list, so for ease of readability and to minimize confusion, I've printed them up separately, I hope you don't mind. Not all of them are cel animated comedies, but then again not all of your suggestions are cel animated, or comedies. Some of your definitions were a little non-specific , so I reviewed your list, made a basic judgement call, and interpreted "cartoons" to mean the same as "animation".

Thank you again for including me in your survey. Somehow I ended up with three separate ballots, so I took the liberty of sharing the extras with two Emmy Award-winning director/ animators I have had the pleasure to work with.

Best of luck with your endeavor.

Sincerely,
Teresa Drilling

LETTERS

The following is a letter sent to Gunnar Strom (ASIFA International) from Michael Sporn regarding film festivals that seem to bemoving away from the original goals set by ASIFA.

Dear Mr. Strom;

I am a member of ASIFA International. For 12 years my company has tried to produce high quality children's films. We have won awards in Annecy, Ottawa, Berlin, Hiroshima as well as an Oscar nomination, a television Emmy, and a Cable Ace award. However, I am a disillusioned animation producer with some complaints about animation festivals and question whether ASIFA can and/or should help.

Most recently, ASIFA sponsored the Ottawa Animation Festival. Here, my studio entered 10 films. Four were half-hour programs and six were shorts. Fewer than half depended on English to understand the action. All have won International Awards and have been screened at many film festivals, yet, not one of these films was accepted at Ottawa.

I understand that many films were entered, and I understand that only relatively few could compete. But I wonder what the purpose of an ASIFA sponsored Festival is when the Festival can only screen 10% of the films entered.

One of the original by-laws of ASIFA's organization was to promote festivals for the screening of films. Yet fewer and fewer films get screened at these festivals. Surely, there should be out-of-competition programs to screen many of the films not chosen by pre-screening judges! Surely, there should be side-bar events to enable film makers a place to program their own work for other animators!

Ottawa is just an example of the recent attitude at many of these festivals. The films have become secondary to the festival itself, and I am not encouraged to support such festivals. If other film makers have a similar complaint, there will be fewer films entered, and even fewer non-sponsored films made. After all, what is the point of making a film which certainly will not recoup a financial investment and will also not be screened for other animators at animation festivals!

I have told David Ehrlich of my annoyance, and he has suggested I write to you. Hence, this letter. If it serves any purpose in promoting animation, it will have been worth the time.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Michael Sporn